

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 5706

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, RP

SUBJECT: AMRSP REPORT ON POLITICAL DETAINEES -- BOOK TWO

SUMMARY: ASSOCIATION OF MAJOR RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS (AMRSP) HAS PUBLISHED SEQUEL TO ITS PAMPHLET POLITICAL DETAINEES IN THE PHILIPPINES. IT CLAIMS THAT TORTURE CONTINUES DESPITE GOP DENIALS. NEW PUBLICATION CITES SEVERAL CASE HISTORIES OF TORTURE SINCE JANUARY 1976. IT RECOUNTS CHURCH EFFORTS TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNMENT "PERSECUTION" OF CHURCH. AMRSP HAS PRESENTED PUBLICATION TO VISITING MEMBER OF CODEL WOLFF (SALZBERG). AMRSP REPORT IS WELL DOCUMENTED, BUT OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT IT FAILS TO GIVE GOP CREDIT FOR SOME IMPROVEMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS AREA. END SUMMARY.

1. ASSOCIATION OF MAJOR RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS (AMRSP) HAS PUBLISHED SEQUEL TO ITS STUDY ON POLITICAL DETAINEES WHICH APPEARED LAST MARCH 31, 1976 (SEE MANILA 5973--'76). FIRST CHAPTER IS DEVOTED TO GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF DETAINEE SITUATION. REPORT STATES THERE WERE 563 DETAINEES AS OF 1 MARCH 1977 IN 25 DETAINEE CENTERS, BUT NOTES THERE ARE AT LEAST 80 DETENTION CENTERS IN NATION AND AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF "SAFE HOUSES." DEPARTMENT'S REPORT OF HIRC IS CITED. AMRSP CLAIMS ITS JUDGMENTS ARE "TO SAY THE LEAST NAIVE," ESPECIALLY STATEMENT THAT TORTURE NOT THE RESULT OF
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EXPLICIT GOP POLICY AT POLITICAL LEVEL. AMRSP MAINTAINS MARTIAL LAW GOVERNMENT TOLERATES IF IT DOES NOT ENCOURAGE TORTURE AND DETAINEE MALTREATMENT. DESPITE STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT MARCOS, AMRSP CLAIMS SAFE HOUSES HAVE NOT BEEN DISCONTINUED; TORTURE IS STILL GOING ON; AND THAT OF SOME 80 INDIVIDUALS CITED IN AI REPORT AS HAVING PRACTICED TORTURE, ONLY FOUR HAVE BEEN PUNISHED.

2. CHAPTER 2 OF REPORT CONTAINS FAIRLY DETAILED CASE STUDIES OF 14 INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN TORTURED SINCE JANUARY 1976. PURIFICATION PEDRO IS DISCUSSED IN THIRD CHAPTER. SEVERAL OF INDIVIDUALS CITED APPEAR TO BE NPA OR NPA SUSPECTS.

3. THIRD CHAPTER, "THE CHURCH AND THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS," DETAILS CHURCH-STATE CONFRONTATION RESULTING FROM REGIME'S DISPLEASURE AT CHURCH'S DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. REPORT STATES THAT PREVIOUS AMRSP REPORT "SPOKE OF RELIGIOUS REPRESSION IN THE PHILIPPINES." BY 1977 REPRESSION HAD ESCALATED INTO "PERSECUTION."

4. APPENDIX 1 OF REPORT IS COMMENT ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO THE GOP (COPY OF WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN POUCHED TO EA/PHL). IT HAS BEEN UPDATED, HOWEVER, TO INCLUDE NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS RECENTLY PICKED UP (INCLUDING GROUP IN KALINGA APAYO FOR ACTIVITIES AGAINST CHICO RIVER DAM SCHEME). APPENDIX 2 CONTAINS LETTERS CONCERNING DETAINEES, INCLUDING LETTERS FROM INMATES OF BICUTAN REHABILITATION CENTER.

5. MEMBER OF AMRSP DETAINEES COMMITTEE GAVE EMBOFF COPY, AS WELL AS VISITING MEMBER OF CODEL WOLFF (SALZBERG). SHE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PUBLICITY IT MIGHT RECEIVE, SINCE SUCCESSOR OF AP'S ZEITLIN WHO BROKE STORY OF FIRST REPORT DOES NOT SEEM AS INTERESTED, BUT GAVE COPY TO WP'S STRINGER WIDEMAN. IN ABSENCE OF "SIGNS OF THE TIMES" CONFIDENTIAL

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6. COMMENT: LIKE BOOK 1 LATEST AMRSP REPORT IS CAREFULLY DOCUMENTED ACCOUNT OF TORTURE CASES WHICH APPEAR TO HAVE OCCURRED SINCE 1976. DESPITE FACT THAT SOME TORTURE CONTINUES TO OCCUR, AMRSP HAS BEEN EXCEEDINGLY GRUDGING IN GIVING GOP CREDIT FOR STEPS TAKEN TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. FOR EXAMPLE, REPORT STATES GOP HAS RELEASED 55 OF THE INDIVIDUALS LISTED IN THE AI REPORT WITHOUT STATING THAT THIS IS 55 OUT OF 108 -- A NOT INSIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE. THERE ARE ALSO ELEMENTS OF NAIVETE IN THE REPFOOT WHICH BORDER ON THE DISINGENUOUS. IN THE SECTION ON THE DEATH OF PURIFICATION PEDRO IT IS NOTED THAT MISS PEDRO "WENT TO BATAAN UPON AN INVITATION EXTENDED TO HER FROM SOME FORMER CLASSMATES WHO HAD CHOSEN TO WORK IN THE HILLS." IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VOCATION OF ITS AUTHORS, THE REPORT TENDS TO JUDGE THE GOP AGAINST A HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARD WHICH IS

ESSENTIALLY A "COUNSEL OF PERFECTION" THAT FEW SOCIETIES,
MUCH LESS MARCOS' REGIME, CAN EVER HOPE TO ATTAIN. COPY
OF REPORT BEING POUCHED EA/PHL.
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